

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A sports boot adapted to receive a user's foot and ankle, the sports boot comprising:

an outer shell having a semirigid sole and a flexible upper attached to the sole, the upper having an aperture therethrough;

a harness disposed within the outer shell, the harness including a flexible panel adapted to wrap about a portion of the user's ankle;

a cord slidably engaging the harness and adapted to tighten the harness about a user's ankle; and

a ~~tensioning~~ tightening mechanism attached to the harness, the tightening mechanism drivably engaging the cord such that the user can tension the cord, the tightening mechanism adapted to hold the cord substantially at the applied tension;

wherein the ~~tensioning~~ tightening mechanism includes a knob that extends through the aperture in the upper when the harness is held within the outer shell.

2. (Original) The sports boot of Claim 1, further comprising a liner that is removably insertable into the outer shell.

3. (Original) The sports boot of Claim 1, wherein the cord extends around a rearward portion of the harness.

4. (Original) The sports boot of Claim 1, wherein the cord is a stainless steel cable.

5. (Original) The sports boot of Claim 1, wherein the harness defines an elongate vamp gap and includes at least one pair of cord keepers fixedly attached to the harness on opposite sides of the elongate vamp gap, wherein the cord keepers each define a U-shaped channel that slidably receives the cord.

6. (Original) The sports boot of Claim 5, further comprising an elongate cord keeper that extends around a back portion of the harness.

7. (Currently amended) The sports boot of Claim 1, wherein the ~~tensioning~~ tightening mechanism comprises a knob that is movable between a first position wherein the knob drivably engages the cord, and a second position wherein the knob does not drivably engage the cord.

8. (Currently amended) The sports boot of Claim 1, further comprising an elastic grommet disposed in the outer shell aperture, the grommet having a center hole adapted to releasably receive a portion of the ~~tensioning~~ tightening mechanism.

9. (Original) The sports boot of Claim 8, wherein the grommet is made from a thermoplastic rubber.

10. (Currently amended) The sports boot of Claim 3, wherein the outer shell upper includes a tongue, and the cord slidably engages the tongue such that ~~tensioning~~ tightening the cord will bias the tongue inwardly.

11. (Original) The sports boot of Claim 10, wherein the harness is releasably attached to the outer shell upper.

12. (Currently amended) A snowboard boot comprising:  
an outer shell having a relatively rigid sole portion, and a flexible upper portion, the flexible upper portion including an aperture therethrough;

a harness assembly having a flexible panel disposed in the outer shell and adapted to wrap about a portion of the ankle of a user, the flexible panel defining a pair of opposed ends and having a plurality of cord guides attached thereto;

a tightening mechanism having a cord that extends between the opposed ends of the flexible panel, the cord slidably engaging the cord guides, and wherein the tightening mechanism [[that]] is adapted to tension the cord, the tightening mechanism including a rotatable knob portion that extends through the aperture in the outer shell.

13. (Original) The snowboard boot of Claim 12, wherein the cord is a stainless steel cable.

14. (Original) The snowboard boot of Claim 13, wherein the outer shell further comprises a tongue portion, and further, wherein the cord slidably engages the tongue portion.

15. (Original) The snowboard boot of Claim 14, wherein the cord slidably engages the tongue through a cord keeper attached to a strap that releasably attaches to the tongue portion.

16. (Original) The snowboard boot of Claim 14, further comprising a plurality of sheaths that is slidably disposed about a portion of the cord.

17. (Original) The snowboard boot of Claim 14, wherein the harness assembly is fixedly attached to the outer shell.

18. (Original) A boot for receiving a user's foot and ankle, the sports boot comprising:

an outer shell having a sole fixedly attached to an upper, the upper having a high-top portion including an aperture therethrough;

a harness assembly including a flexible panel adapted to wrap about at least a portion of the user's ankle, a plurality of cord keepers attached to the flexible panel, and a cord slidably retained by the cord keepers;

a tightening mechanism attached to the flexible panel, and disposed to extend through the aperture in the high-top portion, the tightening mechanism engaging the cord to allow the user to selectively tension or de-tension the cord.

19. (Original) The boot of Claim 18, wherein the cord includes a stainless steel cable.

20. (Original) The boot of Claim 19, wherein the outer shell further comprises a tongue portion, and further wherein the cord slidably engages the tongue portion.

21. (Original) The boot of Claim 20, wherein the cord slidably engages the tongue through a cord keeper attached to a strap that releasably attaches to the tongue portion.

22. (Original) The snowboard boot of Claim 21, further comprising a plurality of sheaths that are slidably disposed about a portion of the cord.

23. (Original) The snowboard boot of Claim 21, wherein the harness assembly flexible panel is fixedly attached to the outer shell.